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The U.S. Intelligence How Well Does

"I told my people that I wanted to know about something before it happened. When I did not it meant we were not doing our job, that it was an intelligence gap."

—William Colby, former director of the CIA

This is the first of two articles on the U.S. intelligence community.

By Martin Schram and Jim Klurfeld

Newsday Washington Bureau

Washington—Top policy officials in the Carter administration say they are dissatisfied with the caliber of information analysis provided by the U.S. intelligence community.

Those officials, including White House National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, believe that the material reaching their desks often is not well analyzed and at times has failed to alert them to major developments in the world. Their concerns were made clear during a series of Newsday interviews with leading policy makers and their assistants, current and former intelligence officials, and intelligence experts on Capitol Hill.

"The United States does seem to have a particular fascination with technology and gadgets," Brzezinski said. "I would say that the American information-gathering techniques are the best in the world—the equipment is absolutely remarkable. But it is the analysis of the information that is so important. And I think there is not enough attention given to the ability to say what all the information that is collected means."

Secretary of State Vance also is known to feel that there is a problem. Vance says there is too much information and there is a need to decide on priorities and then to do a better job on the priority matters.

Officials of the Carter White House say they were not able to obtain timely or adequate intelligence analyses on such matters of international significance as the recent invasion of Zaire, the removal of Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny, and the strength of the conservative Likud Party in the Israeli election campaign, forecasting the possibility of a new hard-line era in Israeli leadership.

And the complaint is not limited to the administration. Similar criticisms of the Ford intelligence community have been heard.

One of the most public officials was Richard

Armitage, who in a nationally televised speech recently that the intelligence community

provided poor information and Defense Department

failed to predict the war in the Mideast.

"I was not surprised the ball," Nixon said

war. "I thought basic community needed a shake

In a series of interviews with intelligence experts, the problem is:

● There is too much information and not enough

what it means.

● The fragmented intelligence community

information from reaching usable form.

● Intelligence agencies

decision-makers expect of them, in part because the decision-makers do not ask the right questions and make the right requests of the agencies.

● At times decision-makers receive good intelligence but disregard it for their own reasons of policy and/or politics.

Rep. Otis Pike (D-Riverhead), whose House Committee on Intelligence first publicly raised the question of the quality of intelligence, defined the problem this way: "The real question is: Are we getting timely knowledge in the proper fashion? Are the cost and the risk justified by the end product?"

About 80 per cent of the U.S. intelligence budget is spent on military affairs, according to an informed source. But now decision-makers are saying there must be greater emphasis in the intelligence community on political analysis. "They hate like hell to predict the future," one Carter national se-

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